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Iran Exhibits U.S. Need Of Intelligence Agency

JOHN F. KENNEDY once said that in a democracy, every person holds office and responsibility. But in the super-sensitive arena of the American intelligence community, the last president's ideal of democracy could present a difficult challenge to those officials who possess the responsibility of protecting our national security. How do you or how should you protect secrets in an open society?



Stanfield Turner

Admiral Stanfield Turner, director of Central Intelligence, has been addressing that puzzling question. In several recent speeches, Admiral Turner has been articulating an unprecedented sensitivity to the public's demand for a greater accountability of our intelligence agencies.

"The most significant change in American intelligence is the introduction of effective external oversight mechanisms from both the executive and legislative branches of the federal government," Turner observed during a recent speech. The CIA and other intelligence agencies are evaluated by an Intelligence Oversight Board, appointed by the president, that is comprised of three members from outside government. Anyone is free to report activities that they suspect may be illegal or improper to this group.

ALSO, THERE ARE congressional oversight committees in both the House and the Senate. The House committee has a staff of approximately 30 and the Senate panel has a

staff of about 60, including clerical assistants and consultants. Finally, Admiral Turner has been quick to note the effective role of the press. "We view the media as another important oversight mechanism in reassuring the public and in preventing abuse," Turner stated.

Turner has been perceptive to note a similarity in the current environment of both the press and the intelligence community. "We in the intelligence community are professionals dedicated to secrecy but we are constantly defending ourselves against being pushed into excessive openness. And the press are dedicated professionals who are facing — because of Supreme Court decisions — great pressure to dispense with your secrets."

As director of Central Intelligence, Admiral Turner has also quickly acknowledged publicly that the abuses of civil liberties, exposed during the Nixon Watergate debacle, must never be repeated. But Turner has also been vigilant in his pursuit of the CIA's special integrity to fulfill its mission in accordance with the National Security Act of 1947. "By reducing the excessive amount of information that is kept secret, we engender respect for that which remains classified," Turner explained. "But, it takes more than mere openness to preserve genuine secrets," Turner remarked, "there must be some renewed acknowledgement in the media and in the public that secrecy is legitimate."

TURNER IS RIGHT. It has become increasingly clear that the United States cannot take sides in all international conflicts. And it is also vital, as



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...puzzling question

the events in Iran have demonstrated, that our national security requires impeccable intelligence in order to relate where and when it would be in the long-term interests of our nation to intervene.

The U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee, chaired by Sen. Birch Bayh, D-Ind., is currently preparing a new charter for the intelligence agencies. This charter will provide guidelines — specific dos and don'ts — for the first time to be applied to the intelligence agencies. Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan, D-N.Y., is a member of the Senate subcommittee that is drafting the document that will eventually be considered by the full Senate. Sources on the Senate Intelligence Committee staff told the Courier-Express, however, that the events in Iran have postponed the completion of the draft charter document and that it probably won't be ready for consideration until February 1980.